



**GOOD HOPE EQUESTRIAN TRAINING CENTER  
VOLUNTEER DUTIES & TRAINING PROCEDURES**

## **SAFETY RULES AND REGULATIONS GOOD HOPE EQUESTRIAN TRAINING CENTER, INC.**

Adherence to our safety rules and regulations will help to assure safety and quality service for all individuals involved in our therapeutic riding classes.

### **ARRIVAL AT EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITY (EAA) SESSIONS:**

Good Hope Equestrian Training Center volunteer paperwork must be completed prior to implementation of the volunteer training and service hours. We would appreciate if you could have the three documents completed and signed prior to your arrival.

At least 24 hours' notice is required if you are unable to make the session. Remember, the therapeutic horseback riding/hippotherapy sessions are dependent on you! As a volunteer you are an integral part of the team and your participation is essential to this process.

All volunteers should arrive at the barn ready to work twenty minutes before the session is scheduled to begin. Volunteers are expected to leave the Good Hope Equestrian Training Center, Inc., only after all riders have departed and the program equines and equipment are safely put away, unless given permission by the instructor.

The riders are welcome to arrive for sessions up to fifteen minutes before the scheduled time, so they can be ready to begin their class. Volunteers will be asked to assist GHETC staff in the preparation of the lesson, as well as the supervision of the riders. Helmets must be properly fit to the rider before the client approaches the horse. The volunteer will be supervised by the GHETC in the fitting of the helmet, unless they were thoroughly trained within this competency.

### **CLOTHING/PERSONAL CARE:**

All volunteers must wear closed shoes (i.e: sneakers & boots) at all times when they are volunteering and/or present at the center. The volunteers can wear jeans/pants & shorts (length – to finger tips when arms are on sides). In addition, please do not wear low cut shirts and or shirts that expose your stomach. Please do not wear baggy clothing, and/or any dangling jewelry (i.e: hoop earrings, necklaces out of your shirt) that can get pulled out or would interfere with your role as volunteer.

Please pay attention to your body as it pertains to sun exposure. Because we do not have a covered arena, you are going to need to bring and reapply sun screen. If you forget to bring sunscreen with you, please ask the GHETC staff because we keep a supply within the clubhouse and stable areas.

If you need to utilize the restroom during a class, please notify the instructor and wait patiently until another volunteer relieves you of your position. If you need a drink the water cooler is located in the main barn on the right hand side. Please make sure to drink

at least one full glass of water following each session, so you do not dehydrate. The cups are stored in bin beside the water cooler.

### **PERSONAL ITEMS:**

Good Hope Equestrian Training Center (GHETC) is not responsible for any personal items. Because we are unable to supervise the clubhouse during the riding sessions, we ask all volunteers to please keep their cell phones, purses and any of their other personal belongings in their locked vehicle. If you would like your keys lock away, please asks the staff and we will place them in the locked cabinet in the stable.

**Remember no cell phones are permitted while volunteering in the riding ring and/or the grooming stations, unless they are turned off or on silent!**

### **WHILE AT GOOD HOPE EQUESTRIAN TRAINING CENTER:**

Horses are sensitive, flight animals. No one should touch or interact with horses they do not know. Hand feeding of all animals at Good Hope Equestrian Training Center (GHETC) is prohibited. Treats may be given to GHETC only with staff permission, and only out of feed buckets.

Running anywhere on the property is strongly discouraged outside of the riding ring, unless there is an emergency. Shouting and running are prohibited anywhere near the riding rings or where people are working with horses. It is imperative that the riders are supervised by the designated volunteers at all times. Family and friends are asked to observe the EAA sessions from the clubhouse and may only interact or participate in the session if directed by the instructor.

Please do not distract riders during session time. While small talk with riders can be beneficial and enjoyable for them, please make sure that you are engaging in conversation during appropriate times (i.e: not during mounted and/or ground instructional sessions). In addition, only give directions to the rider if instructor requests your assistance. Many times the instructor will ask for your assistance to guide and motivate the rider, so they can better meet their personal goals. If you have any concerns or issues, please feel free to speak with the instructor after class.

Volunteers are not permitted within the stable without the presence of a Good Hope staff member. Regardless of inclement weather, we will personally call you if we are canceling the session. As you know, it may be raining at your house; whereas it is sunny and beautiful at Good Hope.

All volunteers must be quiet during therapeutic riding sessions. Horses can become spooked with sudden movements and sounds, so for safety reasons for everyone involved this rule must be followed. This means no running around, playing on the ramp, talking or standing close to the ring. If you are taking a break, please watch the class from a distance (in clubhouse or standing away from the grass ring).

There is a twenty-four hour cancellation policy in which you must call. Please call the main office and/or the Executive Director when and if you need to cancel your appointment.

Good Hope office: (305) 258-2838

Peggy Bass cell phone: (305) 297-4729

**VOLUNTEER TRAINING WILL CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS:**

- A. FACILITY LAYOUT**
- B. GENERAL APPROACH AND INTERACTION WITH CHILD AND ADULT WITH DISABILITIES**
- C. CONFIDENTIALITY PROCEDURES**
- D. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**
- E. REVIEW OF VARIOUS DISABILITIES**
- F. SAFETY PROCEDURES WHILE WORKING WITHIN STABLE**
- G. ROLES OF A SIDE WALKER**
- H. FUNCTIONS OF A HORSE HANDLER**
- I. TASKS AS A SPOTTER**
- J. ASSISTING WITH MOUNTING ON GROUND, RAMP,..ETC.**
- K. THE NATURE OF THE HORSE**
- L. TACKING UP AND UN-TACKING THE PROGRAM HORSE/PONY**
- M. UNDERSTANDING HORSE BEHAVIOR**

## **VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION HORSE HANDER**

### *What to do in class:*

The leader is responsible for the horse at all times

You may be asked to lead a horse in from the barn or you may take over a horse that is already in the arena.

- ❖ Hold the lead shank in your right hand 10" to 12" from the bit or halter and loop the excess in your left hand. Always have two hands on the lead. Remember never to wrap the lead rope around your hand. If the horse bolts, your hand could be injured.
- ❖ If possible, lead the horse from the inside so that you are closest to the center of the arena. This will enable you to hear the instructor better and the instructor can see you. If you have side walkers, remember to give them room between the wall and the horse, otherwise they'll get squashed.
- ❖ The instructor will tell the rider what to do with the horse. As expected, the horse handler's job is to assist the rider in carrying out these instructions safely while giving the rider every opportunity to do as much on his or her own as possible. It is important to allow riders to do as much as they can for themselves even if it takes a bit longer.
- ❖ Remember not to force the horse around the arena. Always remain in the leading position between the horse's head and shoulder. Encourage the horse with your voice and encourage the rider to use his or her legs. Never poke a horse in the ribs. Most horses only walk as fast as the leader is going, so try to keep an even, brisk pace so that the rider gets the full benefit of the horse's movement.
- ❖ Sharp turns or abrupt starts or stops may unseat the rider. You can help the rider by turning as smoothly as possible and warning him or her of a "halt" or "walk on".
- ❖ On occasion, the instructor may ask you to let the rider go off the lead, but you will be asked to remain in the leading position so that you can assist or take control if necessary.
- ❖ In the event that your rider falls off, hold onto the lead rope and move the horse away from the fallen rider. The instructor will tend to the rider and give instructions as per the emergency plan, which will be reviewed during the orientation. Please keep the control of the horse at all times, because a loose horse can cause a lot of trouble for all the riders and volunteers in the class.

## **VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION SIDE WALKER**

### *What to do in class:*

The side walker is responsible for the safety of the student and should stay at the rider's side to give physical support or assist the rider in carrying out the instructor's directions.

### *What to do during class:*

Since the duties of the side walker vary greatly with each student, the instructor will inform you of a particular student's requirements.

- ❖ Keep the rider interested and occupied until all riders are mounted and the class is ready to begin
- ❖ Walk next to the rider's hip facing forward. Depending on the amount of support the rider needs, you may grasp the knee roll and provide light pressure across the rider's thigh. The side walker's other hand can provide support if needed to the rider's lower leg. Some riders are assisted in keeping their heels down if you gently grasp the back of the heel. A rider who needs considerable support will wear out the side walkers quickly. You may need to switch sides to avoid muscle fatigue. Alert the horse handler and the instructor, who will take the horse off the track and halt so the side walkers can change sides one at a time.
- ❖ Remind the rider to pay attention to the instructor. You may repeat or reinforce the instructor's directions and help your rider carry them out, but try not to encourage chatting.
- ❖ If your rider starts to slip off the horse, do not panic. Gently hold the rider in place so he or she does not slip any further. Try to help the rider get centered again. If this does not succeed, you may need to ask the horse handler to halt or go to the middle of the arena.
- ❖ If a rider does come off the horse, try to guide him or her to the ground as gently as possible.

## **VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION SPOTTER**

The spotter is an essential person within the therapeutic riding team. This key person is responsible in assisting the instructor during both mounting and dismounting procedures. The spotter serves as an assistant thus lending the extra hand while holding the stirrup down, making sure the saddle does not slip while the rider is mounting. In addition the spotter serves as an assistant when transferring the rider from the wheelchair to or from the horse during manual transfers. These various roles necessitate a large amount of training prior to the volunteer assisting within this capacity. A volunteer will not be used to assist within this role until they have been assessed for mastery.

Manual transfer from wheelchair to horse:

- ❖ Stand on the assistant's platform. When the two staff take the rider out of the wheelchair lean forward to help swing the rider's leg and hip onto your side of the saddle. Assist the staff with the rider's balance until the side walker has taken the thigh hold position.

Manual dismount - transfer from horse to wheelchair:

- ❖ Stand parallel to the instructor on left side of horse. As the instructor pulls the rider from the side you will assist the rider's legs over the horse's withers. You will then assist the instructor by placing the rider into the wheelchair.

Assisting during a ground mount:

- ❖ Hold the right stirrup iron down as the rider places their foot into the stirrup. This will help keep the saddle from slipping on a horse's back

Assisting during a ground dismount:

- ❖ Assist the rider to swing their right leg over the horses back so they can safely dismount.

### **ASK THE LEADER TO STOP THE HORSE IF:**

1. The rider is off balance and cannot regain their balance while the horse is moving
2. The saddle pad has slipped you feel the girth may be loose
3. The stirrups need adjusting
4. The rider's helmet needs to be adjusted
5. The rider is fatigued, in pain, or needs to stop for other reasons
6. You need to change sides, you are having some difficulty and cannot carry out your job in comfort or efficiency

Riders who need moderate support, especially support to the back, will need more attention. Side walkers should be specifically instructed in these methods before using them with a rider.

### **MOUNTING & TRANSFER PROCEDURES:**

A transfer is a process used by a person to move from one place to another, such as from a bed to a chair or from a wheelchair to a chair. Mounting transfer is the method a rider uses to get from a wheelchair or from standing onto a horse. The rider may mount the horse from the ground, from a mounting block, from a platform, or from a ramp. The method of the mounting transfer will depend upon the following:

1. The size and weight of the rider.
2. The rider's skill, strength, mobility and degree of independence
3. The condition of the rider, so that you know what type of transfer would be best suited for their needs.
4. The effort of the transfer on the rider.
5. The type of transfer that the rider necessitates.
6. The mounting facilities
7. The size, strength, and training of the transfer team
8. The type of tack used
9. The size of the horse

In most cases, the mounting transfer is the beginning of the riding lesson.

A mounting transfer that is properly done will "teach" the rider's muscles to move in a more normalized manner. It will be easier on the instructor who guides the transfer and the volunteers who assist the team in the transfer. The rider will feel the achievement of getting onto the horse.

In addition to training your volunteer, each program needs to prevent liability problems from a volunteer involvement. Prior to each volunteer beginning their training session we make sure each individual has completed the Volunteer Application, as well as signed the equine activity release, as well as the authorization for emergency medical treatment. By doing this we inform the volunteer and their parents that this high risk activity could possibly harm them.

## UNDERSTANDING HORSE BEHAVIOR

### EQUINE SENSES

It is essential to develop a proper rapport with the program horse, because it is critical to provide a safe environment in a therapeutic riding setting. Establishing a routine of acknowledging the horse senses, instincts is a positive step in foreseeing behaviors, managing risks and increasing positive relationships.

#### **SMELL:**

The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very sensitive and it allows them to distinguish other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to assess various situations.

#### **Best Practices:**

It allows the program horse the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling

- Horse treats are not allowed to be carried in your pocket while in the riding ring, since horses may desire to go after them and it will break their concentration.
- All volunteers should be discouraged from eating or having food in the arena.

#### **HEARING:**

The horse's sense of hearing is incredibly keen. The horse may also combine their sense of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alerting sounds. "Hearing and not seeing" is often the cause of an anxiety & run away reaction. Whereas, forward upright ears is a sign of communicate for attentiveness and interest. Horses who have their ears laid back are often communicating that they are upset and/or showing hostility towards another horse or person. When a horse moves his or her ears back and forth it is generally indicative of their attentiveness or interest in something.

#### **Best Practices:**

- Horses can be on guard and cautious when they hear something but are unable to see it. If the horse is acting tense, talk to them in a quiet and calm voice for reassurance.
- Make sure to always steer clear of using a loud voice, because this can be frightening to a horse.
- As the volunteer you need to observe the horse's ears, so you understand what they are trying to communicate to you.

**SIGHT:**

The horse's eyes are set on either side of the head; there is good peripheral (lateral) vision, but poor frontal vision. A horse focuses on objects by raising and lowering its head. The horse's visual memory is very accurate. Horses are thought to see quite well in the dark, due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy as to whether or not horses see in color.

**Best Practices:**

- The horse may notice if something in the arena or around the premises is different. Always allow the horse/pony the opportunity to look at new objects prior to the lessons. The GHETC instructors will work with you to introduce new toys and games that the horse may be unfamiliar with.
- The equine has peripheral vision; consider a slightly looser rein, enabling them to move their head when taking a look at objects.
- Although the horse does have good peripheral vision, they also have two blind spots; directly in front and directly behind. The best way to approach a horse is to their shoulders, not from behind the horse. The horse may be unable to see around the mouth area, which is a safety consideration when hand feeding.

**TOUCH:**

Touch is used a communication between horses and people. Horses are sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs.

**Best Practices:**

- Handlers should treat the horses gently but firmly.
- Each horse has sensitive areas, and it is important to be familiar with them (i.e. ears, flanks & stomach areas).
- Watch rider leg position. Riders may need appropriate assistance to keep their leg in place. Always ask the instructor what is the best handling technique.
- Horses will often touch or paw at unfamiliar objects. For example, a horse may paw at a bridge or ground pole before crossing over it

**TASTE:**

Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects.

**: Best Practices:**

- Taste is closely linked with smell and touch; therefore, a horse may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, as this could lead to possible biting. That is why at Good Hope we always utilize a bucket to provide the horses' treats or a meal, so they do not respond to fingers as food.

**SIXTH SENSE:**

Equines have a “sixth sense” when evaluating the disposition of those around them. Horses can be hypersensitive in detecting moods of their handlers and riders.

**THE HORSE’S WAY OF LIFE:**

In addition to understanding the horse’s sixth senses, we need to appreciate and increase our awareness of the horse’s habits.

**FLIGHT AS A NATURAL INSTINCT:**

Horse’s would rather turn and run away from danger than face and fight it.

**Best Practices:**

- At a sudden movement or noise, the horse might try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly.
- A frightened horse might try to escape by pulling back. If this happens speak to them in a soft manner and calm them down. If on the cross ties talk to them softly while quickly freeing the quick release knot and cross ties. Make sure not to ever stand or walk behind the horse.
- Most horses chosen to work in an EAA setting have less of an instinct to flee. The horse may look to you for reassurance. It is helpful if the volunteer remains calm and talks to the horse in a soothing voice.

**HERD ANIMAL:**

Horses like to stay together in a herd or group with one or two horses’ dominant, with a pecking order amongst the rest.

**Best Practices:**

- Be aware that a horse might not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or a horse loses sight of the others.
- Be aware that if the horse in front of the line is trotting, the horse that is following may attempt to do the same.
- If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected.
- For safety, it is recommended to keep at least three horse’s length between horses when riding within a group.

Being aware of the horse behaviors is one of the best safety precautions that can be used in your facility. Knowing how to ready your horse can prevent an accident and increase the quality of your “mutual” relationship.

In order to make our EAA sessions run smoothly, we rely on our trained volunteers to assist us during this programming facet. We believe that “hands on training” is the best approach, so we have our new volunteers shadow our trained staff and volunteers until they are ready to handle their assigned duties. Each of the volunteer duties and responsibilities will be reviewed and demonstrated by Good Hope staff before you assist in the lesson. Please feel free to ask questions, because all questions are important. Thank you again for volunteering your time with Good Hope Equestrian Training Center.

We would appreciate if you could print and sign this page after you have read and you understand the various components of your possible roles within the Equine Assisted Activities (EAA) team. Your next step in this educational process is to review the Volunteer Training Power Point presentation, which further highlights the roles of the EAA team and gives a solid overview of various types of disabilities and methods of working with our riders. As soon as you have completed and reviewed these educational tools, you will be ready for some hands on training. Please contact the office at (305) 258-2838 and we will set up a time to meet with you and review your paperwork (Volunteer Application, Equine Activity Release & Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment form), as well as sign you up for additional training and your EAA schedule.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent (if volunteer is under 18 years of age)